Lincoln Memorial

129

Official National Park Handbook

Handbook 129

Lincoln Memorial

A Guide to
The Lincoln Memorial,
District of Columbia

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About This Book
The Lincoln Memorial is one of the great national memorials in the Nation's Capital. It has a commanding setting and an emotional involvement that makes a visit to it highly personal and intimate. Part 1 of this handbook, by architectural observer E.J. Applewhite, places the memorial building in the context of Lincoln's position in our national consciousness. Part 2, by the late Lincoln historian Paul Angle, recounts briefly the Civil War President's struggle to preserve the Union and the lasting contribution of his achievement. Part 3 is a series of capsulized views of the memorial from construction to becoming one of the nation's primary symbols.

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This memorial is a testament in stone to a man, to a myth, and to an ideal that distinguishes the United States among nations.

The man is Abraham Lincoln. The myth is of a hero who preserved the Union. And the ideal is the enduring integrity of our republic in the face of a threat that a whole part of this continent from Virginia to Florida to Texas might have become a separate nation.

The Lincoln Memorial is a monument to all the states, not just the North and the South. The Arlington Memorial Bridge, the most handsome and graceful of all the bridges across the Potomac, serves as a functional, visual, and conceptual link between this classical memorial and Arlington House, which before the Civil War was the home of Gen. Robert E. Lee. This reciprocal focus between the shrines of the two wartime leaders symbolizes the eventual reconciliation of the North and the South.

The axis of Arlington Memorial Bridge affords an oblique integration of Arlington Cemetery on a hill in Virginia with the east-west axis of the Mall, hinging at the Lincoln Memorial with L'Enfant's dominant grid for the District of Columbia. But the main orientation of the Lincoln Memorial is toward the west front of the Capitol on another hill more than two miles away. The junction of the bridge axis and the Mall axis at Lincoln Memorial circle provides the urban landscape of West Potomac Park with a welcome note of asymmetry—both thematically and conceptually. The result is nothing less than majestic.

Of all our wars, the Civil War was the Nation's most American—American in its battleground and American in its issues, not just a social principle or slavery or economic rivalry, but the question of the survival of a republic where the sovereignty of the people is expressed through the federation of its separate states. In a nation at war the chief function of political leadership is to enlist support from the people and to provide the military command with the means to fight and a will to victory whatever the cost. It was Lincoln's fate that it fell to him to provide the unyielding kind of resolve that was needed to end the agony and to form a basis for reconstruction.

Lincoln was a man of prodigal contradictions. He was a manipulator of men but humble before God. He managed to be at once homespun and urbane,

Pages 4-5: *The familiar words of Lincoln's Gettysburg Address are chiseled into the south wall of the interior of the Memorial.*

The illuminated statue predominates as the first light of dawn reveals the Memorial's classical architectural details.

both poised and approachable, uncouth yet dignified, dissembling but astute. He was a man of peace and order, and yet he could stoop to suspending *habeas corpus*, calling up enlistments, and proclaiming a blockade—all without Congressional sanction—when he felt that such measures were called for, for the survival of the government.

There can be few American visitors to this memorial who do not bring with them a personal knowledge of what Lincoln accomplished and an even keener memory of what Lincoln said. It is no denigration of George Washington to concede that though he may have been first in war and first in peace, he must yield to Abraham Lincoln that particular niche of being first in the hearts of his countrymen.

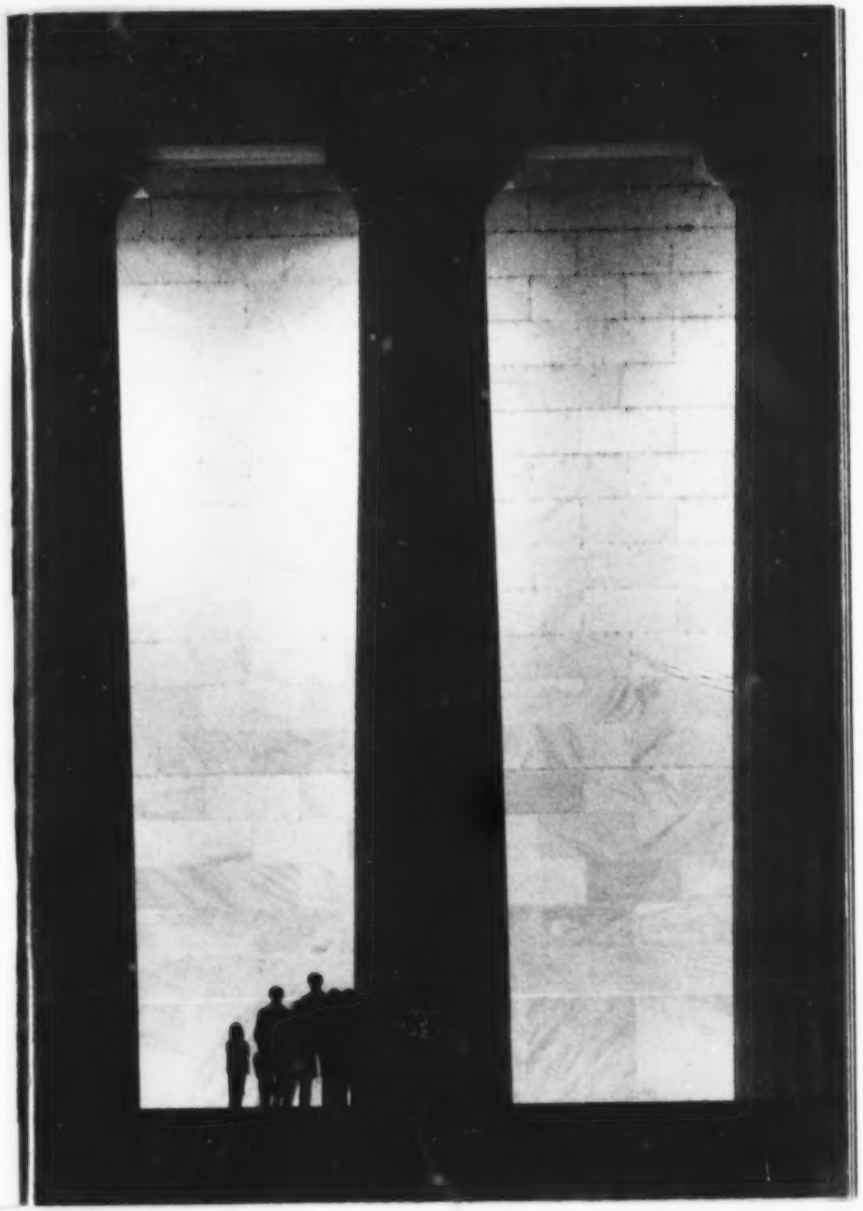
Wherever civilization flourishes, people share their common hopes and fears in memories of great events and speeches that take on the qualities of myths, resolving contradictions in our culture and providing the Nation with a sense of identity. Like Herman Melville, Henry David Thoreau, and Walt Whitman, Abraham Lincoln was among the great myth makers of America's 19th century. Lincoln's two great speeches—the Gettysburg Address and his Second Inaugural, delivered only 41 days before his assassination—are graven on the memorial's interior south and north walls, confronting the visitor with a galvanizing clarity. For a hero as much remembered for the words he spoke as for the deeds he accomplished, it is appropriate that the graces of this interior are more literary than architectural.

But how did this place come to be?

Two years after Lincoln was assassinated, Congress established a commission to erect a monument to his memory, but 50 years were to elapse before the memorial was completed. The eventual site in West Potomac Park was then a remote and swampy marsh and there were strong objections to it. Some critics wanted an obelisk like Washington's, others argued for sites where Union Station now is or atop Meridian Hill on 16th Street. John Russell Pope sketched a huge pyramid with Doric porticoes emerging halfway up the middle of great triangular slopes. Some automobile enthusiasts proposed a memorial highway all the way from Washington to Gettysburg. Luckily these proved to be no more than false starts. The present marble temple was worth the wait.

The Memorial's heroic proportions become strikingly apparent when contrasted with figures.

Pages 10-11: *Daniel Chester French's statue has become an enduring tribute to Lincoln, the humanitarian who had to preside over this country's most deadly war.*



From a vantage point across the Potomac, the Lincoln Memorial, the Washington Monument, and the Capitol dome stand grouped together as a majestic trio of national symbols.

The memorial was designed by architect Henry Bacon as a Neoclassic American version of a Greek Doric temple with a Roman Style attic—a Parthenon, but with the main facade and entrance on the side instead of at the end. The central block is surrounded by a peristyle porch of 36 columns representing the 36 states that constituted the Union at the time of Lincoln's death. The attic parapet is capped with a frieze of 48 bas-relief festoons representing the 48 states as they existed at the time the edifice was completed in 1922.

Daniel Chester French, the premier public sculptor of his day, modeled the colossal seated figure of Abraham Lincoln facing out through the colonnade at the top of the great sweep of steps down to the Reflecting Pool. Though he had no formal training, he worked in the academic vein of the Beaux Arts tradition, integrating the sculpture and the architectural setting. A hundred of his statues may be found in 35 American cities, but this seated marble figure of Lincoln is the Nation's favorite heroic sculpture, evoking deep-seated emotions in the American experience.

Since its dedication in 1922, Lincoln Memorial has documented the Nation's progress toward the goal of Emancipation. Dr. Robert Moton, the president of Tuskegee Institute, delivered a dedication address to an audience that was rigidly segregated. In 1939 Marian Anderson sang at the top of the memorial's steps after she was denied the use of a private auditorium nearby. And 100 years after the signing of the Emancipation Proclamation, in August of 1963, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., gave his famous "I Have a Dream" speech that ignited a crowd of 200,000 as well as the rest of the Nation. His dream remains unrealized, but the progress made in racial relations since the Civil War serves as a witness that its dead indeed died not in vain.

It was Lincoln's fate to "save the Union" and it was his lasting achievement to make the average American feel that his dignity as a citizen of the republic is bound up with the fate of the Union. The Lincoln Memorial is a recognition, an expression of gratitude—and perhaps of continuing hope—that some of our politicians can some of the time achieve some of the attributes of sainthood.

Part 2

A Determined, But Patient Man

The sudden death of Abraham Lincoln on April 15, 1865, plunged the Nation into unexampled grief. Those who had admired the President without reservation—and of these there were no great number—tried to outdo each other in assigning him a place among the Nation's immortals. Bitter critics—and of these there were many—forgot their complaints and turned to eulogy. Hundreds of thousands of plain people attended the funeral services that were held almost daily in cities on the last long journey from Washington to Springfield. More touching were the small groups that lined the railroad track and bowed in silence as the black-draped train moved to its destination.

From Europe came unusual tributes. *Punch*, the English magazine which had sneered at Lincoln for four years, suddenly saw in him a "true born king of men." Disraeli said that the American President had successfully survived "one of the severest trials which ever tested the moral qualities of man." French liberals with Victor Hugo at their head, caused a medal to be struck which bore this inscription: "Dedicated by French Democracy to Lincoln, President, twice elected, of the United States—Lincoln, honest man, who abolished slavery, reestablished the Union, saved the Republic without veiling the figure of Liberty." When the news of Lincoln's death reached Sweden, an observer wrote, "Our men clenched their fists in vain fury and our blue-eyed women shed many tears in memory of the remarkable man."

When Abraham Lincoln was elected President of the United States in November 1860, few would have predicted that his death four and a half years later would have been regarded as the passing of a great man. Viewed superficially, the first 51 years of his life offered few signs of greatness. In the United States of his time, Lincoln's life was not unusual, and a career such as his rarely pointed to fame.

He was born in central Kentucky on February 12, 1809, of poor and undistinguished parents. In all he had less than a year of schooling from backwoods schoolmasters of uncertain educational attainments. When he was 7, his parents moved to a region in southwestern Indiana only a step removed from the wilderness. Two years later his mother died, but his father soon married a widow of sturdy character who reared her stepson and his sister as her own.

Pages 14-15: *G.P.A. Healy's 1869 portrait of Lincoln hangs in the State Dining Room at the White House.*

The grave of Nancy Hanks Lincoln (1784-1818), is located in Lincoln Boyhood National Memorial, near Lincoln City, Indiana. Thomas Lincoln's second wife and stepmother to his two children was Sarah Bush Johnston Lincoln (1788-1869).

The earliest known picture of Lincoln, opposite, was probably made in 1846 when he was 37 years old.

Young Lincoln passed the days and years doing the chores of a pioneer farm for his father, sometimes as a hired hand for neighbors. Hard work agreed with him, though he disliked it, and he grew tall and strong beyond his years.

Thomas Lincoln, Abraham's father, never succeeded in teasing more than a bare living from the soil. In 1830 he decided to move to central Illinois. Young Lincoln, now 21, accompanied the family and helped them get started. The next year he struck out on his own. After his second flatboat trip to New Orleans, he settled in the little village of New Salem on the Sangamon River. There he clerked in a store, started a business of his own, which failed, and made a lean living as postmaster and deputy surveyor.

Meanwhile, events had enlarged his outlook. The Black Hawk War had broken out in 1832, and Lincoln had enlisted and served 90 days. Shortly before, he had announced himself as a candidate for the State legislature. He was defeated, but the heavy vote he received in New Salem encouraged him to run again two years later. This time he was elected. In all, he served four terms in the Illinois House.

At New Salem Lincoln soon became aware of the gaps in his education. With the help of the village schoolmaster he studied grammar, then surveying. Encouraged by a Springfield lawyer, he studied law and was admitted to the bar in the spring of 1837. He immediately moved to Springfield, the newly chosen State capital, and became the junior partner of his mentor, John T. Stuart. After four years with Stuart, Lincoln went into partnership with Stephen T. Logan, whose profound knowledge of the law and habits of industry and thoroughness must have been of great benefit to the younger man. In 1844 Lincoln formed his own firm, taking as his partner William H. Herndon. Meanwhile, on November 4, 1842, Lincoln had married Mary Todd of Lexington, Kentucky, who was then living with relatives in Springfield.

Lincoln's political ambitions persisted and even rose a notch. He wanted to go to Congress. Twice he failed to obtain the Whig nomination, but the third time he succeeded. He won election and served in the House of Representatives from 1847 to 1849. The experience was disappointing. By opposing the Mexican War, which his constituents favored, he forfeited his chances for reelection. He returned to

Springfield, determined to keep out of politics.

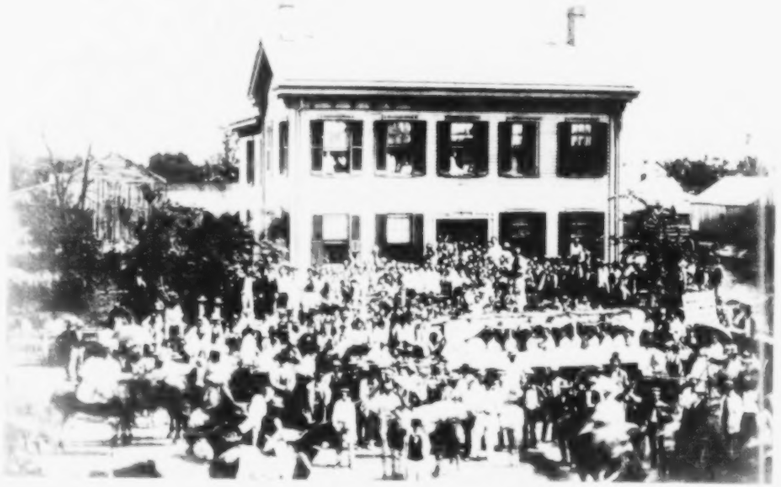
For five years he kept the resolution. At the bar he rose steadily, engaging in litigation of ever-increasing importance while riding the circuit and trying cases involving hog stealing and slander for $10 fees, often uncollectable. Had it not been for his old rival, Stephen A. Douglas, Lincoln might have lived the rest of his life as a moderately prosperous lawyer, unknown outside his own State.

In 1854 Douglas, U.S. senator from Illinois and chairman of the powerful Committee on Territories, introduced a bill to organize the territories of Kansas and Nebraska. In the course of legislative maneuvering, he accepted changes that specifically repealed the Compromises of 1820 and 1850. The Compromises prohibited slavery in the national territories, and thus prevented the spread of an institution which large numbers of Americans, particularly in the North, had come to consider evil in itself and a threat to the Union.

The passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Bill stirred up a storm. Lincoln, to use his own words, was aroused "as he had never been before." He plunged back into politics but with no larger purpose than to secure the reelection of the anti-Nebraska congressman from his own district. His speeches, however, attracted attention throughout Illinois. In 1855 he ran for the U.S. Senate, but he lost by a narrow margin. The next year he joined the Republican Party and worked hard in the Presidential election, thus enlarging his own reputation.

The year 1858 was a crucial one in Lincoln's career. Douglas, the Democrat, would come up for reelection to the Senate. By common consent, Lincoln became the Republican candidate. Upon Lincoln's challenge the two men met seven times in formal debates, and for three months each spoke almost daily at his own party rallies. Lincoln polled a larger popular vote than Douglas, but the legislature, which then elected senators, was so constituted that Douglas was reelected. Yet for Lincoln the result, though a cruel disappointment at the time, benefited him in the long run. The debates, widely reported, made him known the country over as an effective opponent of the extension of slavery.

When the Republican National Convention met in Chicago in May 1860, Lincoln had little more than



In June 1860 the Republican Party met in Chicago to select candidates to represent it in the upcoming national elections. Only once before had the Republicans entered a nationwide contest. The hall in which they met was called the Wigwam.

Presidential campaigns of more than a century ago were conducted differently than they are today. Lincoln remained in Springfield the entire time and occasionally attended rallies there. This one took place in front of his home.

the support of the Illinois delegation. The rank-and-file expected the nomination to go to some well known Republican like William H. Seward or Salmon P. Chase, who had long fought the slave power in Congress and on the stump. For some reason, neither of these men was acceptable to powerful blocs. Only Lincoln had no enemies. He was nominated on the third ballot, primarily because, in the politician's word, he was "available."

The Democratic Party proceeded to make Lincoln's election certain by splitting into two bitter factions. Another party, consisting mostly of those who adhered to the old Whig standard, further divided the opposition. As a result, Lincoln was elected on November 6, though his opponents polled a total of 2,815,617 votes to his 1,866,452.

The election of Lincoln, a "sectional" candidate, led to the secession of South Carolina. Six other states of the Deep South followed her lead and formed the Confederate States of America. Thus when the new President took the oath of office of March 4, 1861, he was confronted by a divided Nation moving inevitably toward civil war.

When the South assaulted Fort Sumter, a Federal outpost in Charleston Harbor, six weeks later, the Nation faced the most desperate crisis in its history. And the reins of power were in the hands of one who, at least on the surface, had little preparation for the trial before him.

Yet those who knew Lincoln well, who had followed his career in recent years, could have had reason for confidence. After his reentry into politics in 1854, a new depth, power, and moral fervor marked his speeches. He was an ambitious man—even he would not deny that—but above personal gain he put both the perpetuity of the Union and its dedication to the noblest ideals of humanity. "Let us readopt the Declaration of Independence," he said, "and with it, the practices, and policy, which harmonize with it. . . . If we do this, we shall not only have saved the Union; but we shall have so saved it, as to make, and keep it, forever worthy of the saving. We shall have so saved it, that the succeeding millions of free happy people, the world over shall rise up, and call us blessed, to the latest generations."

Lincoln proceeded to buttress his stand against the expansion of slavery with historical evidence. By

1860 his argument was fully developed. At Cooper Union in New York City, he presented it in one of the great speeches of the century—a speech with a peroration that lifted a sophisticated audience to its feet: "Wrong as we think slavery is, we can yet afford to let it alone where it is, because that much is due to the necessity arising from its actual presence in the nation; but can we, while our votes will prevent it, allow it to spread into the National Territories, and to overrun us here in these Free States? If our sense of duty forbids this, then let us stand by our duty, fearlessly and effectively. . . . Let us have faith that right makes might, and in that faith, let us, to the end, dare to do our duty as we understand it."

Lincoln, moreover, had indicated clearly that he would not compromise on essentials. This determination came out soon after his election, when desperate expedients to stave off disunion were being proposed. "Let there be no compromise on the question of *extending* slavery," he wrote to a Republican senator. "If there be, all our labor is lost, and ere long, must be done again. . . . Stand firm. The tug has to come, and better now, than any time hereafter." For weeks he was reluctant to speak of secession, still hoping that mutual interests and traditions might bring North and South together again, but on his way to Washington for the inauguration he gave one indication of the policy he would follow. "The man does not live who is more devoted to peace than I am," he said at Trenton, New Jersey. "None who would do more to preserve it. But it may be necessary to put the foot down firmly."

Four years of war would bring these qualities and others into bold relief. Lincoln accepted the challenge of the South at Fort Sumter. He could do no less without condoning a fatal attack upon democratic government. "This issue," he wrote a few weeks later, "embraces more than the fate of these United States. It presents to the whole family of man the question, whether a constitutional republic, or a democracy—a government of the people, by the same people—can, or cannot, maintain its territorial integrity against its own domestic foes. . . . So viewing the issue, no choice was left but to call out the war power of the government, and so to resist force employed for its destruction, by force for its preservation."

Anthony Berger, one of Mathew Brady's assistants, took this endearing portrait of Lincoln and his son Tad as they looked through the pages of a picture book. The photograph was widely reprinted and was often entitled "Lincoln reading the Bible to Tad." Sometimes other family members were added to the scene. In 1984 it was used on the U.S. postage stamp "A Nation of Readers."

Mary Todd Lincoln, the Kentucky-born First Lady, loved beautiful clothes. Critics described her as insensitive to the grim realities of war, but Lincoln usually indulged her.

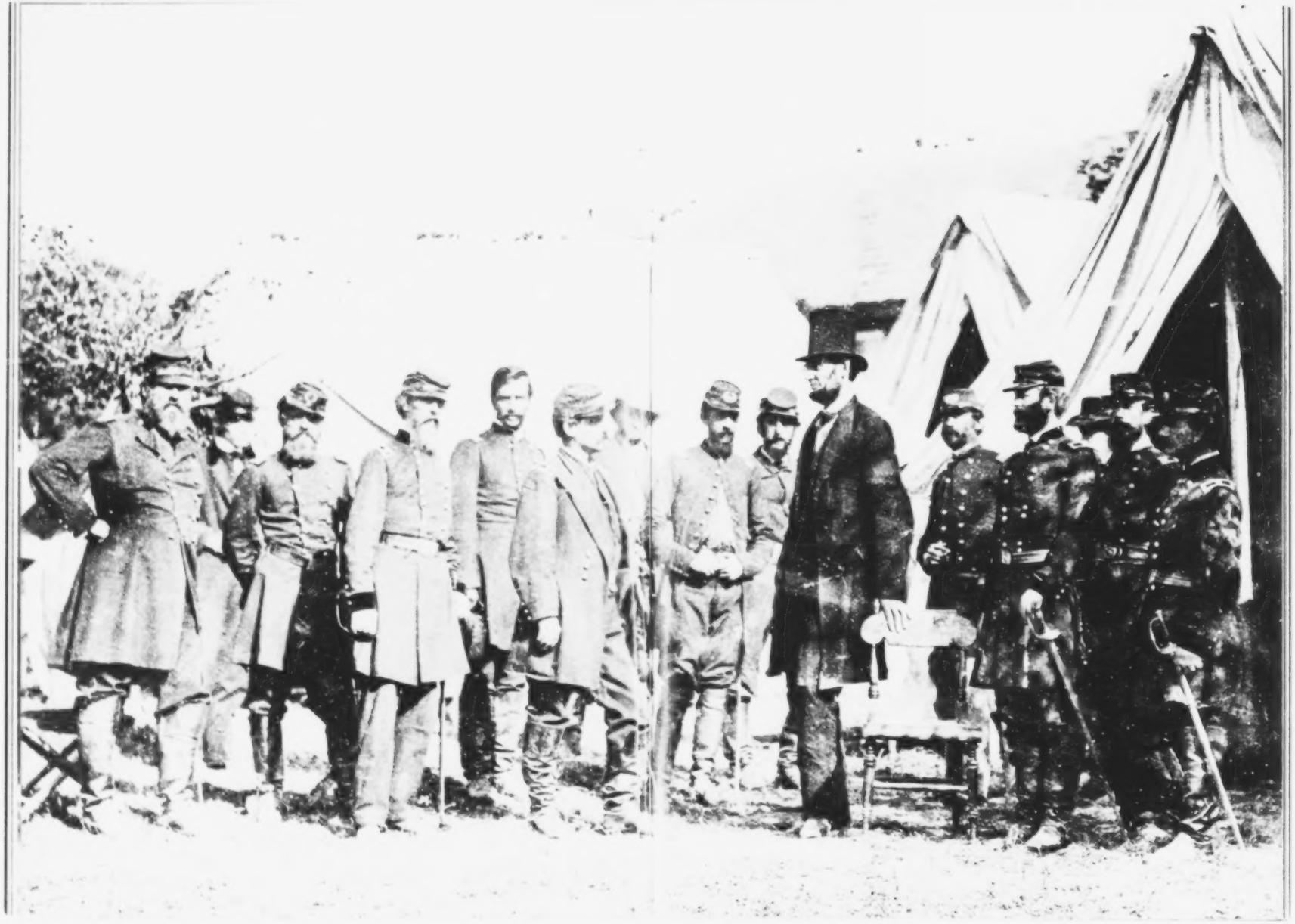
Pages 26-27: *When this photograph was made after the battle of Antietam, the photographer inadvertently showed Lincoln's unusual height. In this group of Union officers, Lincoln was clearly a head taller than everyone else.*

In directing that force, Lincoln determined from the beginning that he would have the final word. Even before Fort Sumter he taught this lesson to his secretary of state, William H. Seward. Seward, doubting the capacity of his chief, had written that when a policy was adopted either the President must pursue it or "devolve it on some member of his cabinet"—meaning, of course, the secretary of state. Lincoln answered, "I remark that if this must be done, *I* must do it."

He took full responsibility for selecting commanders to head the principal Union armies. He made mistakes. To give high commands to Fremont, Pope, Burnside, and Hooker was a grievous blunder, yet the President could only grope in a field where he had no experience. He did have patience, which was finally rewarded when he found Grant and put him in command of all the Union armies.

Many contemporaries interpreted Lincoln's patience and habit of deliberation as weakness. Those closest to him knew that he was anything but weak. In the summer of 1863 John Hay, one of his secretaries, wrote: "The Tycoon [Hay's familiar name for Lincoln] is in fine whack. I have rarely seen him more serene & busy. He is managing this war, the draft, foreign relations, and planning a reconstruction of the Union, all at once. I never knew with what tyrannous authority he rules the Cabinet til now. The most important things he decides & there is no cavil."

One of the "important things" Lincoln decided for himself was the meaning of the war, although he believed that in his interpretation the majority of the people of the North concurred. The South was attempting to set up an independent nation. Lincoln was determined that the Union be restored. This he stated when he issued his proclamation, the day after Fort Sumter, calling up the militia and convening Congress. "I appeal to all loyal citizens to favor, facilitate, and aid this effort to maintain the honor, the integrity, and the existence of our National Union, and the perpetuity of popular government." More than a year later, when Horace Greeley, editor of the *New York Tribune*, chided the President for not interfering with slavery, Lincoln replied: "As to the policy I 'seem to be pursuing' as you say, I have not meant to leave anyone in doubt. I would save the



Union. I would save it in the shortest way under the Constitution. The sooner the national authority can be restored, the nearer the Union will be 'the Union as it was.'"

Even when the end of the war lay only two months off, Lincoln, meeting with representatives of Jefferson Davis, stated that he knew of only one way to end the war, "and that was for those who were resisting the laws of the Union to cease that resistance. The restoration of the Union," he added, "is a *sine qua non* with me."

Long before this Lincoln had decided that if the Union were to be preserved, he must abolish slavery insofar as he could under the Constitution. Accordingly, on September 22, 1862, he issued his proclamation warning that if the states and parts of states in rebellion did not return to the Union by January 1, 1863, their slaves would be "thenceforward and forever free." In due course, he issued the second proclamation as he had promised.

Lincoln's emancipation policy was another of the "important things" he decided alone. When he first laid the subject before the Cabinet in July 1862, he told the members frankly that he had resolved to issue a proclamation of emancipation. He had not called them together to ask their advice but would listen to any suggestions they cared to make. Seward argued for postponement; the military situation was not favorable. Lincoln agreed. When he brought up the subject two months later, he stated again: "I do not wish your advice about the main matter, for that I have determined for myself."

This was not arrogance. In Lincoln's opinion, the Constitution in wartime conferred extraordinary powers upon the President. These powers were his alone, and he would neither dodge nor delegate them. Besides, he could see no one else on the national scene better able than himself to guide the country through its trial. This he expressed when he accepted renomination: "I view this call to a second term as in no wise more flattering to myself than as an expression of the public judgment that I may better finish a difficult work than could one less severely schooled to the task."

As the end of Lincoln's term approached, it was evident that many leaders of the party preferred some other candidate. The President was vacillating,

In the summer of 1862 Lincoln proposed the idea of issuing an emancipation proclamation to his Cabinet. Several members suggested that he wait until the force of his words could be backed up by a strong Union military position. That came with the battle of Antietam, September 17, 1862. This cartoon captures the moment five days later when Lincoln told members of his political family that he was now ready to make a public announcement of the proclamation and that it would go into effect January 1, 1863. From left the members of his cabinet are: Lincoln, Secretary of the Navy Gideon Welles, Secretary of the Treasury Salmon Chase, Postmaster General Montgomery Blair, Secretary of State William Seward, Secretary of the Interior Caleb Smith, Attorney General Edward Bates, and Secretary of War Edwin Stanton.

so they said. He was not wholeheartedly antislavery. He meant to reconstruct the Nation on his own terms and would be lenient toward the South. But the dissidents did not dare affront the mass of Republican voters, whose confidence in Lincoln was undiminished. In June 1864 he was renominated.

The Democrats were jubilant. Expecting to take advantage of the widespread longing for peace at almost any price, and hoping also that the military deadlock would continue, they put off their national convention until the end of August. At that time they nominated George B. McClellan, whom Lincoln had twice removed from high command—unfairly many contended—and adopted a platform calling for an immediate end to hostilities. McClellan accepted the nomination but repudiated the platform.

The hopes of the Democrats, based on war weariness, soon faded. Farragut led a Federal fleet into Mobile Bay. Sherman took Atlanta. Sheridan swept the Confederates from the Shenandoah Valley and destroyed one of Lee's principal sources of supply. Union victory seemed assured, and not far distant. When the voters went to the polls in November, they gave Lincoln a clear-cut majority.

In a little more than five months the war was over, an unconditional victory for the Union. Then came the night of April 14, 1865, and the bleak morning of the 15th when Lincoln drew his last breath.

His death brought immediate eulogies, but much time passed before his countrymen took the man's full measure. They saw at once that he had set one goal—the restoration of the Union—as a justification for prodigal expenditures of life and property; that he, more than anyone else, had administered the government so that victory resulted; and that he had freed many thousands of slaves and had made the abolition of slavery throughout the Nation inevitable.

As time passed, they recognized that he had done more than this. He had seen that the preservation of the Union was only a means to an end, and that the real purpose of the conflict was to prove that democratic government had within itself the strength to overcome whatever assaults might be made upon it. This vision he had clothed in language of imperishable beauty and strength, words mighty as armies in the field. In November 1863 there were critics who

complained of the Gettysburg Address, but posterity has taken its closing plea—"that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom—and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth"—as the noblest appeal uttered for the elevation of mankind.

For those who resisted the Emancipation Proclamation and the use of Negro soldiers, he had words of compelling power: "Peace does not appear so distant as it did. I hope it will come soon, and come to stay; and so come as to be worth the keeping in all future time. It will then have been proved that among free men, there can be no successful appeal from the ballot to the bullet; and that they who take such appeal are sure to lose their case, and pay the cost. And then there will be some black men who can remember that, with silent tongue, and clenched teeth, and steady eye, and well-poised bayonet, they have helped mankind on to this great consummation; while, I fear, there will be some white ones unable to forget that, with malignant heart, and deceitful speech, they have strove to hinder it."

And the world would come to know that Lincoln's trials and agonies left him without rancor. He had never spoken of the Confederates as enemies. Instead, they were "our adversaries" or "those people over there." He had no desire to punish anyone for his part in the rebellion. In fact, he hoped that Jefferson Davis and other leaders of the Confederacy would escape from the country at the end of the war so that the problem of what to do with them would not arise. His attitude toward the South found moving expression in the closing words of his Second Inaugural Address: "With malice toward none; with charity for all; with firmness in the right, as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in; to bind up the nation's wounds; to care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow, and his orphan—to do all which may achieve and cherish a just, and a lasting peace, among ourselves, and with all nations."

More simply, he had revealed his own great soul when he said in response to a serenade soon after his second election: "So long as I have been here I have not willingly planted a thorn in any man's bosom."

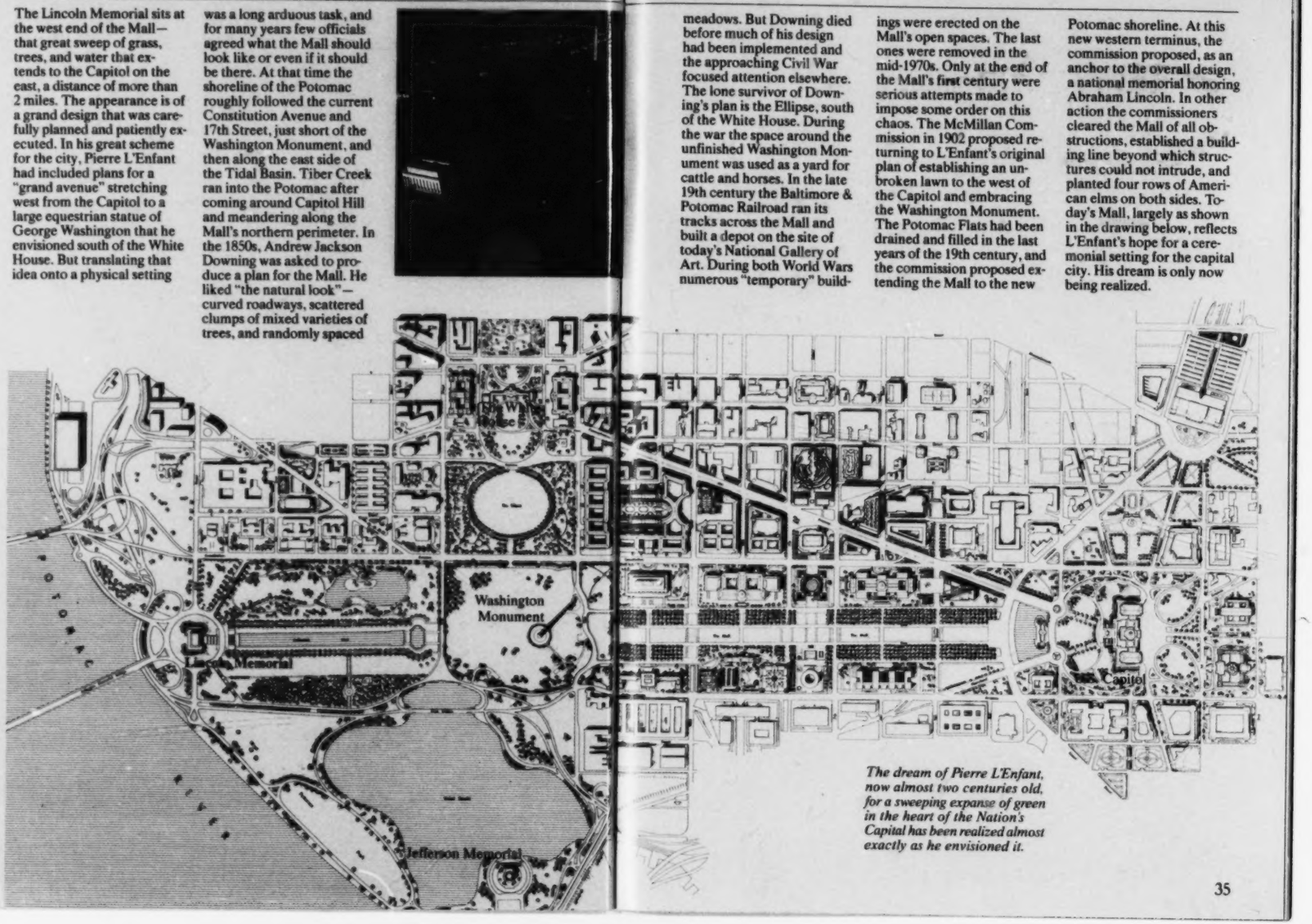
At one time this was thought to be the last photograph of Abraham Lincoln, presumably taken on April 10, 1865, one day after hearing the good news about Lee's surrender. Recent evidence suggests, however, that the picture may have been taken as early as February 1865. In any case, it clearly shows the wearying effects of prosecuting a civil war.

Part 3

Realizing the Memorial

A Noble Setting

The Lincoln Memorial sits at the west end of the Mall—that great sweep of grass, trees, and water that extends to the Capitol on the east, a distance of more than 2 miles. The appearance is of a grand design that was carefully planned and patiently executed. In his great scheme for the city, Pierre L'Enfant had included plans for a "grand avenue" stretching west from the Capitol to a large equestrian statue of George Washington that he envisioned south of the White House. But translating that idea onto a physical setting was a long arduous task, and for many years few officials agreed what the Mall should look like or even if it should be there. At that time the shoreline of the Potomac roughly followed the current Constitution Avenue and 17th Street, just short of the Washington Monument, and then along the east side of the Tidal Basin. Tiber Creek ran into the Potomac after coming around Capitol Hill and meandering along the Mall's northern perimeter. In the 1850s, Andrew Jackson Downing was asked to produce a plan for the Mall. He liked "the natural look"—curved roadways, scattered clumps of mixed varieties of trees, and randomly spaced meadows. But Downing died before much of his design had been implemented and the approaching Civil War focused attention elsewhere. The lone survivor of Downing's plan is the Ellipse, south of the White House. During the war the space around the unfinished Washington Monument was used as a yard for cattle and horses. In the late 19th century the Baltimore & Potomac Railroad ran its tracks across the Mall and built a depot on the site of today's National Gallery of Art. During both World Wars numerous "temporary" buildings were erected on the Mall's open spaces. The last ones were removed in the mid-1970s. Only at the end of the Mall's first century were serious attempts made to impose some order on this chaos. The McMillan Commission in 1902 proposed returning to L'Enfant's original plan of establishing an unbroken lawn to the west of the Capitol and embracing the Washington Monument. The Potomac Flats had been drained and filled in the last years of the 19th century, and the commission proposed extending the Mall to the new Potomac shoreline. At this new western terminus, the commission proposed, as an anchor to the overall design, a national memorial honoring Abraham Lincoln. In other action the commissioners cleared the Mall of all obstructions, established a building line beyond which structures could not intrude, and planted four rows of American elms on both sides. Today's Mall, largely as shown in the drawing below, reflects L'Enfant's hope for a ceremonial setting for the capital city. His dream is only now being realized.



The dream of Pierre L'Enfant, now almost two centuries old, for a sweeping expanse of green in the heart of the Nation's Capital has been realized almost exactly as he envisioned it.

A Triumph of Classical Architecture

The merits of the idea for a memorial to Abraham Lincoln were never questioned. What form this memorial would take, and where it would be located, however, were a source of lively debate in 1911. Congressman James McCleary of Minnesota argued that a memorial should be placed in front of the new Union Station as an ideal location for a statue or other appropriate memorial. Congressman Joseph Cannon, sometimes Speaker of the House, pushed for a memorial arch at the U.S. Soldiers Home or at Arlington Cemetery. He argued that the Mall was already laid out and that no room was left for a memorial. Others argued that the Mall was the appropriate place for a memorial to Lincoln, and that it should be placed at the foot of Capitol Hill, so that Lincoln would look toward the Capitol, symbol of the Union he had preserved. Finally, it was decided that the memorial would be placed on the Mall, but that it would not obstruct the view from the Capitol to the Washington Monument. Thus, the memorial was placed on the axis of the Mall, but to the west of the Washington Monument. Lincoln would look toward the Capitol, but not directly at it.

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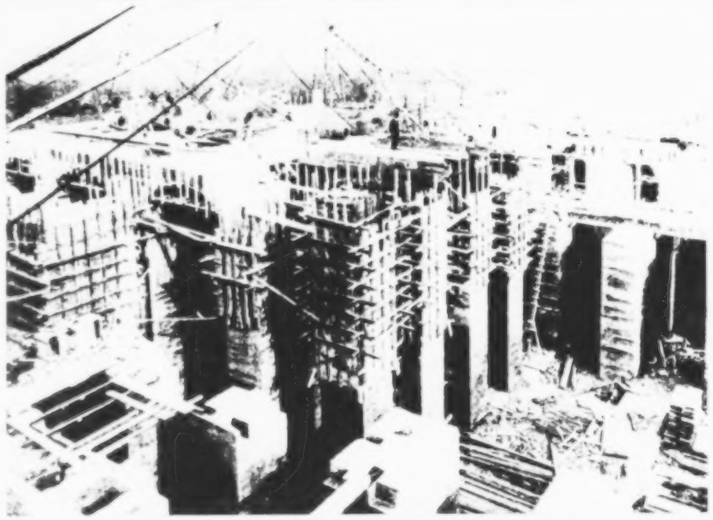
of Lincoln's would be inscribed. To speed a decision, Congress created the Lincoln Memorial Commission on February 9, 1911, and empowered it to select a site. After much wrangling the west end of the Mall was selected February 3, 1912. The next month, the commission chose Henry Bacon as the architect, and two years later Daniel Chester French as the sculptor.

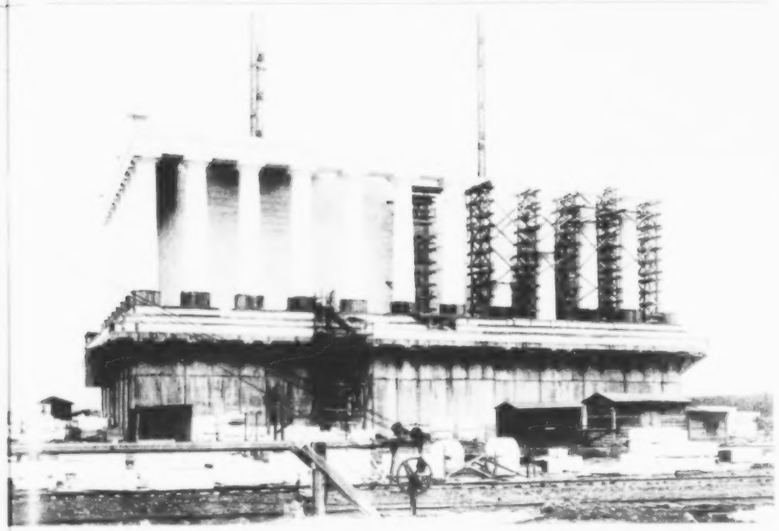
purposefully sought to employ this idiom whenever he could. He took liberties with the form and adapted it to suit the occasion. In the Lincoln Memorial he turned the classic Greek temple building on its side. He thereby created an effective terminus to the Mall, presenting the largest statue of any temple to the east. The building sits

With the work on the Lincoln Memorial building well underway, the commission turned to the task of selecting a sculptor. Daniel Chester French was acknowledged to be the leading American sculptor at that time, and he had worked often with Bacon. For those reasons he was asked, on December 18, 1914, to sculpt the statue of Lincoln. The contract stipulated that French produce a statue 10 feet high. Bacon and French worked together to determine the form of the statue. Should it be a standing or seated figure? Which would work best in the context of the space within the building? The two men, the architect and the sculptor, decided on a seated Lincoln at the back of the chamber in the place of honor facing the Washington Monument. French returned to his studio (below) and studied all the photographs of Lincoln he could find. He also studied the life masks that had been made of Lincoln's face. He ended up deciding to depict the wartime President whose rugged features would reflect the burdens that only a civil war could produce. Then he began work on a quarter-size model. It was presented to the commission and approved February 28, 1916. Soon, however, it became apparent that the statue would be dwarfed in the memorial and would have to be increased in size. Through the use of large photographs French found that doubling the height would be satisfactory. The carving of the statue was done by Piccirilli Brothers, Inc., a firm noted for its stonecutting. No single block of flawless marble could be found for such a colossal statue. As finished, the figure is composed of 28 blocks of white Georgia marble, joined together so precisely that the seams are barely visible. Bacon and French had both hoped that their memorial would not need artificial lighting. But when it was finished they both realized that the figure of Lincoln sat in a deep shadow and was subject to great extremes in the normal weather variations that ranged from bright sunlight to overcast days. Careful planning by both men and the General Electric Company produced a lighting scheme that enhanced the building and the figure, showing fully the skill of the architect and of the sculptor.

A Decade in the Building



Ground was broken for the foundation of the Lincoln Memorial on February 12, 1914. The work was divided into two parts, a sub- and an upper-foundation. Because the memorial was to be built on drained and filled land, extra care had to be taken with the foundation for such a massive structure. The sub-foundation is made up of 122 solid, poured concrete piers with steel reinforcing rods anchored in bedrock. The upper-foundation is a second series of piers resting on the primary columns. The top piers are all joined together by poured concrete arches that form the floor of the memorial, later covered with a sheathing of marble. All foundation work was completed by May 1915. Earlier that year work had started on the main structure itself and fill was brought in to build up the circular mound that would be the landscape setting for the memorial. Work continued at a steady pace until April 1917, when the United States entered World War I. Work slowed considerably because of labor and material shortages but never came to a halt. In 1918, after all parties agreed that the statue of Lincoln would have to be doubled in size so that it would not appear lost in the building, steel struts were added beneath the floor to support the added weight from the larger statue. Once the roof was on, decorative murals were painted on the tops of the south and north walls and the Gettysburg Address and the Second Inaugural were carved into the stone beneath the paintings. In December 1919 and January 1920 the statue of Lincoln was assembled and completed. Periodically during the project, the structure was inspected for settling. When necessary, repairs were made and walls and foundations strengthened. Throughout 1921 roadways and walks were built. Trees and shrubbery were planted, lawns seeded, and huge, old boxwoods were transplanted to the memorial grounds. Work began, too, on the Reflecting Pool between the Lincoln Memorial and Washington Monument. By the time of the dedication, May 30, 1922, all the work was done except for completing the pool and the interior lighting, which were finished within the next few years.



Structure Statistics

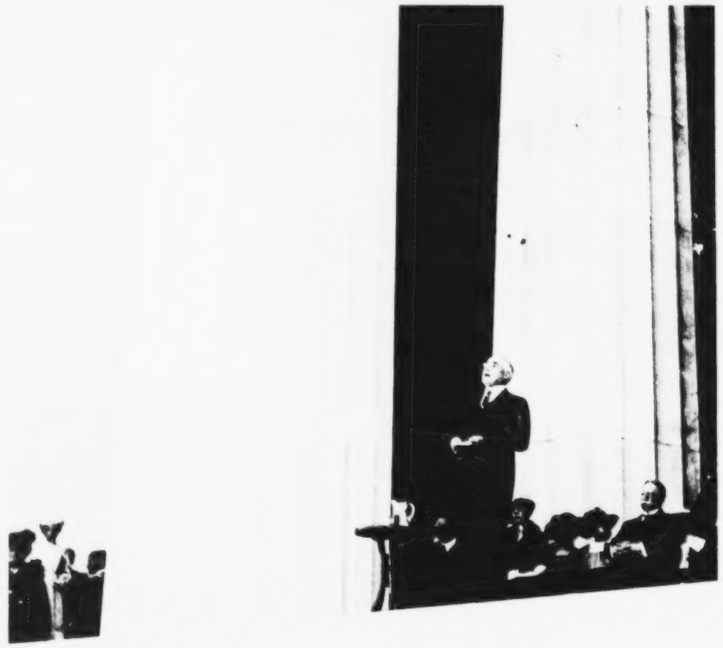
Height of columns in colonnade
44 ft. (13.4 m.)
Diameter
7 ft. 5 in. (2.3 m.) at base
Length of colonnade
188 ft. (57.3 m.)
Width of colonnade
118 ft. 6 in. (36.2 m.)
Height of building
99 ft. (30.2 m.) above grade
80 ft. (24.4 m.) above foundation
Interior dimensions
Central chamber
60 by 74 ft. (18.3 by 22.6 m.)
Side chambers
63 by 38 ft. (19.3 by 11.6 m.)
Height of interior columns
50 ft. (15.2 m.)
Diameter
5 ft. 6 in. (1.7 m.) at base

Materials

Exterior
Colorado Yule marble
Tripods
Pink Tennessee marble
Interior walls
Indiana limestone
Ceiling
Alabama marble saturated with paraffin for translucency
Floor and wall base
Pink Tennessee marble
Interior columns
Indiana limestone
Pedestal and platform for statue
Tennessee marble
Statue
White Georgia marble

The Dedication

On Memorial Day, May 30, 1922, more than 50,000 people went to West Potomac Park for the dedication of the Lincoln Memorial. Of these 3,500 were invited guests—elected and appointed government officials, the diplomatic corps, and distinguished citizens. It was an impressive gathering of notables with Chief Justice and former President William Howard Taft and President Warren G. Harding joining guest of honor Robert Todd Lincoln, former secretary of war, ambassador to Great Britain, and the only surviving son of the Civil War President (right). A public address system made the proceedings audible to the large crowd, and a nationwide radio broadcast enabled thousands of others to hear the speakers. This was quite an achievement, for commercial broadcasting was less than two years old. Many notables took part in the ceremony. The colors of the Grand Army of the Republic were presented, and the invocation was given by Wallace Radcliffe, pastor emeritus of the New York Avenue Presbyterian Church, the church Lincoln attended while President. The main address was given by Dr. Robert Moton, president of Tuskegee Institute. Dr. Moton was not allowed to sit on the speaker's platform, an indication of the racial attitudes of the 1920s. He had to find a place in that section of the grounds set aside for black Americans. Edwin Markham, a poet and lecturer, read his revised poem, "Lincoln, The Man of The People." This was followed by the presentation of the memorial to



President Harding by Chief Justice Taft, who was president of the Lincoln Memorial Commission. In his speech of acceptance, Harding (below) noted that "this Memorial . . . is less for Abraham Lincoln than those of us to-day, and for those who follow after." His remarks were followed by a benediction given by Rev. Radcliffe.

The Lincoln Memorial Commission
requests the honor of your presence
at the ceremony attending the
Dedication of the Memorial to
Abraham Lincoln
on the afternoon of May thirtieth
nineteen hundred and twenty two
at two thirty o'clock
Potomac Park
West of Twenty third Street N. W.
Washington, D. C.

Members of the Commission
William Howard Taft
Chairman
Joseph G. Cannon — Samuel Walker McCall
William B. Bell — Thomas R. Marshall
John Temple Graves
Clarence C. Stereett
Secretary and Disbursing Officer

A National Forum

The Lincoln Memorial site lends itself to large crowds and ceremonial occasions. Since its dedication great numbers of people have come to the Lincoln Memorial, some singly, some in large groups, but all in the spirit of the man whose memory is honored here. Each year on Lincoln's Birthday a wreath is laid before his statue by the President or his representative. Visiting heads of state often make a similar gesture. And at times of great national debate, citizens have assembled here to give voice to their concerns. Fittingly many of these occasions have concerned the struggle by black Americans for their civil rights. One of the most noteworthy assemblies occurred here when Marian Anderson (below left) was refused permission by the Daughters of the American Revolution to sing at Constitution Hall because of her race, and Secretary of the Interior Harold Ickes, at the urging of Eleanor Roosevelt, offered her the use of the Lincoln Memorial. A crowd of 75,000 attended her concert on Easter Sunday 1939. On August 28, 1963, more than 200,000 people (below) led by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., (below right) met here to take a stand for equal treatment for all races.

Other Sites Associated With Lincoln

Abraham Lincoln Birthplace National Historic Site, R.F.D. 1, Hodgenville, Kentucky 42748. Here on the land where Abraham Lincoln was born February 12, 1809, a marble and granite memorial building houses a log cabin that may have been the one he was born in. Much of the land within the park was the farm where Lincoln spent the first seven years of his life.

Lincoln Boyhood National Memorial, Lincoln City, Indiana 47552. On this land the Lincolns lived from Abraham's seventh to his twentieth year. Here his mother died in 1818. In 1829 the family moved to Illinois. The park contains the site of the Lincoln cabin and Nancy Hanks Lincoln's grave.

Lincoln Home National Historic Site, 526 South 7th Street, Springfield, Illinois 62703. Here, to use Lincoln's words, "I have lived a quarter of a century and have passed from a young to an old man." The park contains the house in which Lincoln, his wife, and four sons lived from 1844 to 1861. The four-square-block area is being returned to its 1850s appearance.

Ford's Theatre National Historic Site, 511 10th Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20004. On the night of April 14, 1865, President Lincoln was assassinated by John Wilkes Booth while attending a play here. The dying President was carried across the street to William Petersen's house where Lincoln died early the next morning. Today, Ford's is once again an active theater with a full season of productions. In the theater's basement is a museum that focuses on Lincoln as politician, President, family man, and humanitarian. The House Where Lincoln Died is also open for visitors.

Lincoln's New Salem State Park, R.R. 1, Petersburg, Illinois 62675. From 1831 to 1837 Lincoln lived in this small village. He got his start in politics here, for he represented the area in the Illinois General Assembly. Currently about 23 buildings have been reconstructed and furnished to give a comprehensive view of a rural 1830s village.

Lincoln Log Cabin State Historic Site, R.R. 2, Lerna, Illinois 62440. This was the home of Lincoln's father, Thomas, and stepmother, Sarah Bush Johnston Lincoln. The restored log house stands on its original foundations from which it was moved to be taken to the 1892 World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago.

Lincoln's Tomb State Historic Site, Oak Ridge Cemetery, Springfield, Illinois. Lincoln was buried in this cemetery May 4, 1865. Construction of today's tomb was finished and dedicated in 1874. The interior of the tomb contains symbolic memorabilia relating to Lincoln and his family, all of whom are buried here with the exception of his eldest, Robert Todd, who is buried in Arlington Cemetery.

Besides the three state parks, the State of Illinois also maintains a number of other sites associated with Lincoln: some of the courthouses where Lincoln practiced law as a circuit rider (Metamora, Mt. Pulaski, and Postville), Lincoln Salt Creek, Lincoln Trail, Lincoln Trail Homestead, the Vandalia Statehouse, and Lincoln Monument. For further information write to: Department of Conservation, Land and Historic Sites, 605 Stratton Building, Springfield, Illinois 62706.

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